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President: Mr. Essy ..... (Côte d'Ivoire)

The meeting was called to order at 3.25 p.m.

In the absence of the President, Mr. Yassin (Sudan), Vice-President, took the Chair.

Agenda item 159 *(continued)*

Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies: draft resolution (A/49/L.49)

Mr. Henze (Germany): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. Austria supports this statement.

The Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held at Managua, Nicaragua, from 4 to 6 July this year, adopted two important documents, the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action, which were supported by 74 States. This shows again how deeply the idea of pluralistic democracy has taken root worldwide. The European Union co-financed the work of this important Conference with a contribution of more than $120,000.

The European Union has always supported the evolution towards political pluralism and democracy. That evolution has changed the basis of international relations. Cooperation has replaced confrontation. We share common values of pluralism, the participation of all in political affairs and full respect for human rights, and we support the goal of strengthening and promoting those values. It is in this spirit that we are a co-sponsor of the draft resolution before us.

In Latin America, in the second half of the 1980s one military or dictatorial regime after another began to crumble, and the countries, one after another, began to give themselves constitutional frameworks inspired by the idea of pluralistic democracy. At the end of the 1980s Mr. Gorbachev, in the former Soviet Union, set in motion the process which eventually led to the end of the authoritarian regime. At the end of that process, democracy was installed in the Russian Federation and in other states of the former Soviet Union. Even earlier, countries in Central and Eastern Europe had abolished their one-party systems. One of the results was the peaceful reunification of Germany.

Early in the 1980s the momentum of the democratic idea intensified in Africa, and in Asia the number of countries that have introduced multiparty democracy has increased since the second half of the 1980s.

We in the European Union have followed with great interest and sympathy the democratization process in Eastern Europe, Latin America, Asia and Africa, and we identify with the new or restored democracies.

The European Union's position with regard to the interrelated and mutually reinforcing connections between democracy, human rights and development is well known. We believe that the strengthening of democratic institutions, which guarantee the rule of law, the

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promotion of the values of democracy and respect for human rights, is of paramount importance. We think that those principles not only widen the opportunities for citizens to participate in political decisions but also provide society with an economic impetus.

We are fully aware of the fact that a transition to democracy is not easy. Not only does it require the commitment of political leaders but, more important, it needs the support of the people. In many countries, the change to democratic rule was accompanied by a far-reaching reform of economic structures, which put a burden on the most vulnerable groups of society in particular. In the long run, democracy has to prove that it is the best form of government and that it provides the greatest benefits to all members of society.

In this respect, we are firmly of the belief that economic and social development has greater chances of success in a democracy founded on the rule of law than in a dictatorship in which political and economic decisions cannot be criticized by a parliament or a free press and where the Government is not under pressure to achieve economic success in order to win the next elections. Even where undemocratic regimes pursue sound economic policies, foreign investors might be discouraged because they have no guarantee that such policies will not suddenly be reversed by those regimes. In any case, the issue is not to facilitate governing but to respond to the legitimate wishes and interests of the people. Only a Government elected through universal, equal, free and secret elections can consider itself legitimized to exercise political power.

Here at the United Nations we can witness from day to day how much democratic evolution has changed the character of international relations. In this respect, I should like to point out that living in a community of democracies carries with it certain obligations. Through our participation and commitment we all have to strengthen democracies and help them in their development and in their establishment of a functioning judicial system. The European Union is aware of these obligations. In order to fulfil them, we are ready to help the new or restored democracies in their process towards democratization. I would like to recall that the European Commission is currently making available approximately $50 million for the fostering of democracies. In addition, a number of States members of the European Union are also contributing on a bilateral basis to this end.

On behalf of the European Union and Austria, let me conclude by expressing once again to the Governments and peoples of all new or restored democracies our hope that their efforts to consolidate their democratic systems will succeed. We will assist them in that task.

Mr. Chaves (Kyrgyzstan): It is indeed a signal honour for me to address the General Assembly on behalf of the Kyrgyz Republic on an issue which is not only of the utmost importance but is extremely timely.

The global community, now approaching the twenty-first century, must end the millennium as a human society composed of nations secure in their sovereignty and firmly established in the rule of law and in democratic forms of self-government that provide equality of freedom and opportunity for all. The democratic basics of society presuppose that all the fundamental needs of all of its members are met. Democracy also requires the full participation of citizens in government. The United Nations, as an organization of the global community, has a primary responsibility for the establishment of conditions that eliminate the causes of discrimination, conflict — particularly ethnic conflicts — political and religious tensions, all forms of violence and ultimately war. The survival of democracy in the countries of the world is by no means assured today, and therefore each and every member of the global community has a responsibility for its survival. This responsibility cannot be overemphasized.

In his report, "An agenda for development", the Secretary-General, Mr. Boutros Boutros-Ghali, made a number of very important proposals, including reorganizing the United Nations system; greater cooperation with the Bretton Woods institutions and the new World Trade Organization; the urgently needed empowerment of women; the eradication of poverty; and, nearly the most important, the cancellation of the debt of the poorer nations, which weighs so heavily on the budgets of so many nations today. However, his most important proposal was to end the reliance of the United Nations on voluntary contributions to support development efforts. On this crucial issue the Kyrgyz Republic has officially proposed the creation of a United Nations endowment fund. The Ambassador of Nicaragua this morning spoke about his Government's proposed creation of a special fund, with contributions from Governments, for special emergencies. We fully support the proposal of the President of Nicaragua, but our proposal, though complementary, is quite different.

A United Nations endowment fund of no less than $20 billion might offer a possible source of funds to meet

emergencies, which are bound to occur each year for different reasons. Such a fund would be established as an international goodwill institution, exclusively funded from private sources and in no way from government contributions. It would be established with its own charter and statutes and be subject to its own international board, elected *in tuito personae* and not as representatives of any country or group of countries. However, all continents would be represented. Such an endowment fund could be recommended and approved by the General Assembly as a response to the urgent statement by the Secretary-General during this session. In order to advance this initiative, a small working group could be set up. A preliminary plan and proposal for the creation of a United Nations endowment fund could be ready in reasonable time. Another method might be to create a United Nations endowment fund as an independent, private foundation to support financially the work of the world Organization. It would function outside the mechanism of the United Nations system, similar to other philanthropic foundations. The income from the fund would be donated to the United Nations.

In addition, the Kyrgyz Republic fully supports the 20/20 initiative for achieving universal access to basic social services for sustainable human development, which has been endorsed by the United Nations Development Programme, the United Nations Population Fund and the United Nations Children's Fund. The initiative has universal goals, which we strongly support, and for which we must all work. They include: basic education for all, with a special emphasis on education for women and girls; basic health care for all, including nutrition, reproductive health and family planning services; universal access to safe drinking water and basic sanitary facilities; basic requirements for an acceptable quality of life for all people, including a sustainable livelihood and productive employment; access to credit, land and information for all; adequate shelter; ample participation in governance and decision-making; and full human, political, civil, economic and social rights for all. These are also the requirements of a true democracy.

Draft resolution A/49/L.49 deals with the new or newly re-established democracies. Democracy is a process of constant and laborious achievement. The French philosopher Ernest Renan said that democracy was like a daily plebiscite, the result of the joint efforts of all people. For Hans Kelsen, freedom and equality are the fundamental ideas of democracy. In the mind of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, democracy is the ontological and functional transformation of the subject into a citizen.

It might, nevertheless, be worth while to remember that the "Citizen of Geneva" — as Rousseau signed his *Social Contract*, which had such a great impact on the constitution of so many democracies — also said, "Democracy has never existed and never will".

But we in Kyrgyzstan are convinced that we in the Kyrgyz Republic have a democracy in the best sense of the term. In that sense, we believe, to refer to the immortal words of Abraham Lincoln, that we are a nation, under God, that has had a new birth of freedom and that has a Government of the people, by the people and for the people. We are also conscious that there are other countries in similar situations, experiencing, as we are, increasing difficulties that require and deserve considerable aid. For that aid to be effective, there must be a study and a plan, which must be undertaken at the international level. That is the study and plan on ways and means which the draft resolution requests the Secretary-General to undertake.

Therefore, the Kyrgyz Republic, which is co-sponsored the draft resolution and supports it wholeheartedly, expresses the hope that it will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Telles Ribeiro (Brazil): Brazil is pleased to co-sponsor the draft resolution, entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". Having actively participated in both the First and the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, my country is committed to the Conference purposes and shares its ideas with respect to promoting and consolidating representative democracy, with due regard for the principle of non-intervention in the internal affairs of other States.

The 1988 Constitution of Brazil clearly defines the political framework on which Brazil is founded: sovereignty, citizenship, the dignity of the human person, the social values of labour and of free enterprise, and political pluralism. In addition, it states that all power emanates from the people, who exercise it through elected representatives or directly.

In Brazil democracy is fully consolidated. We practise a system where concern for the individual lies at the heart of the conscience of society. The actions of my Government are oriented towards ensuring that each and every citizen is provided with effective means to achieve his or her well-being and social justice.

Democracy is the best political system for peoples to seek economic and social development, but it is not sufficient by itself. In a world where the universality of certain values is increasingly pursued, little progress has yet been made on promoting the universality of the right to development. We must focus our efforts on strengthening the solidarity of the international community through the values of democracy, but also on international cooperation for development.

In this context, as stated in the Plan of Action adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in the sister nation of Nicaragua, the new or restored democracies have requested the Secretary-General to undertake a study on the ways in which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments towards consolidation. My delegation very much supports that initiative and hopes that the international community as a whole will join in that request to the Secretary-General.

Mr. Laing (Belize): The delegation of Belize is honoured and pleased to co-sponsor the sponsor the draft resolution.

Until less than a decade ago it was widely perceived that there were far-reaching threats to the older and more established democracies. More recently, however, this perception has waned and so, largely, have intimations of the mortality of those democracies. However, even in relation to those democracies, we have been taught some useful lessons through the outstanding initiative of the International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies, organized, first, by the Philippines and, most recently, by the Republic of Nicaragua.

We were specifically reminded by the Nicaragua Conference that democracy is an organic concept and that it is a fragile commodity. As such, it is exceptionally subject to the slings and arrows of general misfortune in the body politic. We were reminded that, even in established democracies, a declining quality of life spells danger for democracy. We recall that there is a close symbiosis between the formally popular structure on which the institutions of the State are based and the possession by all citizens of the goods, services and amenities of modern civilization. As economic vicissitudes proliferate while we try to reconfigure appropriate strategies for global development, the structure of the democratic order becomes more tenuous. This is accentuated by such phenomena as the extraordinary population explosion and the unstructured and incoherent system of global social order.

Because democracy is a fragile plant which thrives when it is sedulously tended, with adequate resources, the deleterious effects of these phenomena are even more harsh in the new and restored democracies. In many of those States, furthermore, the difficulty of maintaining a fully democratic order is intensified by the problematic effects of the dynamism of the present era. Some of these problems are, paradoxically, attributed to the successes of democracy itself. Thus, refugees and internationally displaced persons in search of democracy, freedom and a better life are attracted by the magnetism of such success. Belize can attest to this as it tries to accommodate the 15 per cent of its population who are such persons.

To some extent, this international migration is stimulated by the instant knowledge conveyed by our modern media and communications technologies. To an extent which we are only just learning, these technologies also contribute to a sometimes crass materialism, which may result in undue diversions of energies and resources and the despair consequent on the lack of fulfilment of burgeoning desires. The evidence is accumulating that these technologies and such diversion and despair contribute to the rapidly growing preoccupation with deadly violence now so rampant in the streets of the vast majority of the cities of the world. The case histories of countries like mine, where television was introduced just over one decade ago, prove the point I am making.

The phenomena of which I speak were unknown before the introduction of television. In that short space of time, things have changed. These technologies have vast potential and are undoubtedly popular. However, instead of functioning as the modern electronic surrogates of the ancient market square and town hall, they contribute to the rapid erosion of security and satisfaction, which are the requisite conditions for democracy.

My delegation contends that the issues relating to democracy and symbiotic economic and social questions all pose serious challenges both for global polity and for the absorptive and managerial capacities of our system of international organization. These problems are fully within the purview of the Economic and Social Council, the General Assembly and all other relevant bodies of our system.

This system was put in place near the end of the last world war. At that time the gravity and internationalized nature of the challenges induced the realization that the mechanisms of world order needed to be organic and interrelated. Thus, the key instruments of the wartime era which ushered in the current order stressed the symbiosis of economic, political, security and social dimensions. As for democracy itself, those instruments expressed a clear commitment to the exercise by peoples of the right to govern themselves — that is to say, democracy. They also stressed that each individual and community deserved to enjoy the social and economic conditions needed to underpin democracy.

Too often today we hear strong reaffirmations of selected portions of those wartime commitments. The importance of economic orthodoxy is stressed, especially economic liberalism, non-discrimination and adjustment. But insufficient attention is given to the elaboration and enforcement of special and differential trade and development measures and we devise inadequate strategies to reduce the dead weight of debt on States that are poorest or unconscionably burdened. Neither are desperately needed indigenous technological and industrial capabilities being sufficiently stimulated.

In view of the organic nature of these phenomena, they are an incubus on democracy. That fragile plant is even more endangered when, as is often the case, it is not acknowledged that the very models of democracy often have to vary as much as do the broad groupings of people on this planet. Besides, it is insufficiently acknowledged that democracy is merely a species of human rights and that human rights are composed of diverse elements, including those of a cultural, developmental, economic and social nature. We now know that these concerns are not within the exclusive preserve of State jurisdiction. This organic conception of human rights is a proper and full subject of our international system, which is required to act as facilitator, coordinator and even governor. And, as stressed in the Managua Declaration and in current debates in Committees of the Assembly, effective democracy worldwide will be stimulated by more coherent application of democracy in the family of the United Nations.

The delegation of Belize therefore calls upon the Assembly to adopt this noble initiative of the Republic of Nicaragua and to support the enhancement of this valuable commodity in the new or restored democracies.

Mr. Valencia Rodriguez (Ecuador) *(interpretation from Spanish):* My delegation is pleased that the General Assembly has agreed to include this additional item on its agenda and that it is discussing the item today. This is a question of particular importance to the international community. My delegation therefore supports the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua from 4 to 6 July 1994.

We must use as a point of departure the widely acknowledged belief that democracy is now the form of government that best meets the needs of peoples and guarantees their development. I need not recall that various ways have been chosen to adapt to the traditional and historical characteristics of various cultures and civilizations. We acknowledge that there cannot be a single form of democracy that can be applied indiscriminately to all peoples. Democracy is a concept that evolves continuously in response to the requirements of politics and history. No country, even those that boast that they are the representatives of the best-structured and oldest democracies, can point to the democratic system that could be regarded as the most perfect. Political, economic and social vicissitudes, from which no country is exempt, have frequently led to the suspension or weakening of democratic institutions.

In those conditions, the promotion and consolidation of democracy has been a rather difficult, and sometimes even a traumatic and painful, process. Even today we see many examples of this.

While there is no single model of democracy that can be universally applied, there are none the less fundamental values that can be emphasized as a foundation for the process to which I have just referred.

First, there is an extricable link between the supreme values of democracy and freedom. The only basis for true democracy and political pluralism is the will of the people, freely expressed, in all sovereignty, at the ballot box. This implies full respect for the essential characteristics of the human being, the unrestricted rule of law and the total application of the principle of the equality of all before the law. It follows from this that all discriminatory practices, for any reason or on whatever pretext, are prohibited.

The promotion of and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms are also a *sine qua non* for a truly democratic system. In this connection, we must emphasize the principle of self-determination — that is, the right of peoples freely to choose their own economic,

political and social system and to make proper, rational and sovereign use of their natural resources.

Democracy also entails raising the living standards of societies that find themselves totally unprotected. Thus the struggle against abject poverty must be a joint effort on the part of Governments, international organizations and non-governmental organizations. The war on poverty also implies ensuring broad access to education, culture and health care as well as providing better employment opportunities for all. The World Summit for Social Development especially will be called on to play an important role in this connection.

While Latin America now presents a broad and optimistic picture of representative democracy, that system none the less has undergone serious upheavals, interruptions and changes. Aside from the elements I mentioned earlier, which in Latin America frequently did not come to fruition or suffered regrettable setbacks, there exists another threat to democratic stability: subversion. In some countries, this phenomenon is particularly dangerous. It should be made entirely clear that some forms of subversion, which might be considered to be terrorism, with all its consequences, imperil the fundamental rights of the human person and jeopardize democracy and the maintenance of peace.

To this we must add the serious phenomena resulting from criminal drug-trafficking and the near-institutionalized corruption that exists, which, in some cases, is undermining the very moral and economic foundations of society.

This once again leads us to recall the fundamental link between the promotion of democracy, sustainable development and peace. These concepts are closely interrelated, and progress must therefore jointly be made on all of them. There can be no doubt that development is a guarantee of the full exercise of democracy.

To sum up, we believe that promoting and consolidating democracy should be achieved on the basis of respect for the principles set forth in the Charter of the United Nations and strict adherence to the commitments entered into by Governments under international instruments, particularly with regard to human rights and fundamental freedoms.

In conclusion, it should be noted that the lofty goal of promoting and consolidating democracy requires solidarity and a considerable and sustained effort on the part of the international community. This goal can be most consistently and harmoniously achieved through existing United Nations machinery.

Mr. Kaikobad (Pakistan): We live in an age where the democratic ideal is increasingly triumphant. The long and arduous struggles of peoples have culminated in the attainment of democracy in regions all over the world. Democratic polities have dramatically increased in numbers. Tyranny and authoritarianism appear to be nightmares of the past.

These are times for rejoicing, and yet there is a deep sense of foreboding - an all-pervasive anxiety that the recent, hard-won democratic victories might be reversed. The reason for this lies in the fact that the new or restored democracies face grave challenges in the way of consolidating their systems. There is a danger that some of these democracies might be overwhelmed by the magnitude of the problems confronting them.

The new democracies are threatened on two fronts. Many are faced with a hostile security environment, and all are beset with harsh economic conditions. On both fronts, the United Nations system can take measures to help these nascent democracies.

Threats to security are a direct threat to democracy. To ensure that a democratic polity is able to develop and flourish, it is essential that threats to its security are addressed and removed. The continuing tragedy of Bosnia offers a vivid example of a democracy struggling to cope with an extremely adverse security environment. In essence, the situation in Bosnia is quite simple. A multicultural, democratic State has become the victim of fascist aggression. Instead of being helped to resist aggression, the Bosnian Government has seen its ability to defend itself restricted. Instead of international law being upheld and Serbian aggression vacated, the aggressors are being rewarded with plans that seek to preserve their territorial gains.

The United Nations could play an important role in protecting and preserving a democratic State. No dramatic measures are required. All that is needed is for the United Nations to uphold the principles enshrined in its Charter: the aggressors should be punished, and the aggressed should be allowed the means to defend themselves.

In our own region, the democratic process is threatened by the situation in Indian-occupied Jammu and

Kashmir. In complete violation of United Nations resolutions, the people of Kashmir have been denied their basic right to self-determination. Their struggle to exercise this right is being crushed with extreme brutality. The over-600,000-strong Indian occupation force incarcerates, tortures and even at times rapes Kashmiris with impunity. Unable to crush the indomitable Kashmiri people and their spirit, the Indian forces also adopt a threatening posture towards Pakistan. There are incessant violations of the line of control by the Indian forces. There are also bellicose statements by the Indian leadership. Recently, Prime Minister Rao threatened to send his forces to take over Azad Kashmir. Such threats are made in the vain expectation that Pakistan will be cowed into muting its voice in support of the rights of the Kashmiris. The constant Indian threat of the use of force exacts a heavy toll on our polity. Resources have to be diverted from development activities for defence, and the people are constrained to postpone their hopes for a better future.

The United Nations can play a vital role in strengthening the democratic dispensation in South Asia. It can do so by seeking an immediate halt to the gross violations of human rights in Kashmir. Equally important, the United Nations needs to initiate efforts to urgently resolve the Kashmir issue in accordance with its own resolutions.

Besides ensuring security, the United Nations has a key role to play in alleviating the economic difficulties faced by the new or restored democracies. The establishment of democratic structures quite naturally raises people's expectations that their material conditions would improve quickly and substantially. Such expectations are not easy to fulfil. The new democratic Governments inherit economies that are mismanaged, grossly inefficient and geared to benefit a privileged minority. To set these economies on the right track, difficult decisions have to be taken, wasteful subsidies have to be withdrawn, market forces allowed to operate, and competition introduced. These decisions, while increasing productivity, tend to hurt the more vulnerable segments of society.

Despite a willingness to take tough decisions, many democratic Governments have not been able to ensure economic growth. This is primarily due to an international economic environment that impedes sustained growth. Decreasing capital inflows, crippling debt burdens, restricted markets for exports and adverse terms of trade impact negatively on economic growth regardless of the boldness of decisions taken by the democratic Governments.

Lack of significant growth aggravates the tensions that invariably exist in societies that are undergoing social and political change. These tensions can manifest themselves in divisive politics based on narrow ethnic and sectarian considerations. Once unleashed, such tendencies are difficult to reverse and can pose dangers to newly established democratic institutions.

The role of the United Nations system in such a situation is quite clear. The United Nations must ensure that the global economic environment is conducive to the growth of all States. An essential prerequisite for achieving this is to develop mechanisms within the system that would allow all States to play a meaningful role in the formulation of macroeconomic policy. This would result in more equitable and constructive policies on the key issues of capital flows, debt and trade.

In addition to the larger task of creating a favourable external economic environment, the United Nations needs to assist the democracies in lessening the negative impact of economic restructuring programmes. The United Nations financial and development agencies should help the democratic Governments to put in place social safety nets to soften the impact of economic readjustment on the most vulnerable segments of society. Contrary to what is sometimes asserted, this would not be an economically wasteful measure. It would prevent the alienation of peoples from the democratic process. It would also deprive demagogues of grounds to exploit the people for their own ends. Thus, it would contribute to social stability and consequently ensure proper conditions for economic growth.

The restoration of a number of democracies and the emergence of many new ones provides an historic opportunity for creating an irreversible trend in favour of the democratic ideal. The United Nations system, by addressing key security and economic issues and thereby consolidating the nascent democratic polities can contribute immeasurably to this trend. This would ensure that the next century begins with a world confident that the factors inimical to democracies have been contained and even vanquished.

Mr. Martinez Blanco (Honduras) (*interpretation from Spanish*): The item before us today — which was considered in depth at the International Conferences convened on this subject in Manila, the Philippines, in June 1988 and Managua, Nicaragua, in July 1994 — deserves the Assembly's particular interest, as the new democracies are an integral part of political processes and

processes of reconciliation and development in national societies and of peace and security in the international community, within a concept of greater and more unified security.

As indicated in the 15 November 1994 explanatory memorandum which the sponsors of the draft resolution submitted to the President of the General Assembly when they requested the inclusion of this item on the agenda of the forty-ninth session for consideration in this plenary session, in the Managua Declaration, the Conference, composed of 74 States, expressed:

> "the conviction that a sound democratic and pluralistic system based on the principles established in the Charter of the United Nations and in international covenants and conventions on human rights is closely linked to the implementation of policies aimed at promoting sustainable development ... and equal opportunities" and that "In order to achieve the objectives put forward by the Conference, the Plan of Action drew attention to the need to work out and strengthen at the bilateral and multilateral level modalities for international cooperation that take into account the various realities of the new or restored democracies, in order to strengthen democracy and peace with development." (*A/49/236, paras. 4-5*)

To return to these concepts, my delegation reiterates the view that the United Nations system should support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, of which there are many in the international community and this world Organization.

None of these new or restored democracies is free of problems, be they political, economic, social or other kinds. That is why, if they do not receive the appropriate support, many of them will, unfortunately, have to face serious problems that could further impair the peace and security that should prevail internationally. The United Nations must therefore be a more active protagonist in the promotion and strengthening of these new democracies, giving them the support they need for their development. This support should be not only economic but also technical and institutional, as required. The United Nations has already successfully demonstrated its expertise and efficiency in this area, by means of which it could increase its expertise and efficiency with optimum results in those regions of the world that desperately need its assistance.

When we see with great sadness that many of the new or restored democracies are experiencing economic and social difficulties; that their meagre development is stagnant or shrinking; that they have tremendous debts which they cannot pay because of a lack of resources; and that their creditors, be they Governments of developed countries or international credit institutions, are imposing conditions that further slow their growth and development, we are drawn to the immediate conclusion that those Governments and institutions could help to alleviate the painful situation of these less fortunate countries. Humanizing international credit, revising the external debt and paying a fair price for our export products are, *inter alia*, some measures that could contribute to a partial solution to these problems.

That is why I wish to express the support of the delegation of Honduras for the draft resolution in document A/49/L.49, entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies", under agenda item 159. The draft resolution requests the Secretary-General, from within existing resources, to study the ways and mechanisms in which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, and to submit a comprehensive report thereon to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session. The maintenance of international peace and security deserves all this and more.

Mr. Illueca (Panama) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: Panama has a historic position on the agenda item concerning the promotion and consolidation of new or restored democracies, dating from the meeting of the Amphictionic Congress convened by the Liberator, Simon Bolivar in 1826 on the Isthmus of Panama. At that meeting the Latin American republics that had recently become independent of Spain organized, in the Treaty of Union, League and Confederation against domestic despots and foreign domination. The Protocols of the Congress of Panama contained the fundamental principles of unity and integration in Latin America. Those Congresses were clear precursors of this world Organization.

It is therefore easy to understand the decisive contribution that the Contadora Group — Colombia, Mexico, Panama and Venezuela — meeting on Panamanian territory, has made to peace in Central America. Those countries worked with the fraternal democracies of the Southern Cone and the Southern Pacific towards the creation of the Rio Group, which today constitutes a dynamic and constructive force in

international relations both in our hemisphere and throughout the world.

In our view, there exists a set of ideals and purposes shared by the Rio Group, the Ibero-American Summit and the Hemispheric Summit convened by President Clinton this week in Miami, in favour of contributing to Governments' efforts to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

The draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.49 follows up on the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action adopted by the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua from 4 to 6 July 1994.

My country, as a co-sponsor of this draft resolution, would urge that it be adopted unanimously without a vote.

The delegation of Panama considers that its main purpose in speaking in this discussion is to inform the General Assembly of the democratic origin of the Government of our country that came into office on 1 September last.

President Ernesto Pérez Balladares, who was elected in free and fair elections, stated upon taking office:

> "This is the new face that Panama is showing to its friends abroad. We are no longer at the stage of seeking solidarity for the Canal Treaty or the recovery of the use of our geographical location. We wish now to participate in a new world, which challenges us all, to inform others of the potential of our geographical location. We want to use all opportunities open to us to apply, with decency, justice and respect, a strong, forceful foreign policy free from complexes, a policy that will enable us to meet the challenges of the coming century. We are the friends of all; we are the enemy of none."

Another reason for making this statement is to demonstrate our belief that no better tribute can be paid to democracy than to continue to discuss it, and to do so in a democratic way. This ongoing discussion will some day enable the United Nations to discover the secret of what makes for democratic stability, or democratic imperfection, or the breakdown of democracy — in a word, all the features of democracy.

Like any political concept, the concept of democracy presupposes a science, a knowledge of mankind. Nothing about democracy can be understood if we forget that inherent in it is a concern, a search for a policy that is devised for mankind, a way of perfecting rather than corrupting mankind. When politics becomes the art of forging shackles to subject man rather than the art of liberating him from his needs by satisfying them, who can say exactly what freedom means? This has been the subject of discussion through the ages, but remains relevant because it is a discussion about inequality among peoples, among men, among States.

The United Nations promotes democracy because we know that the benefits of democracy are universal and that inherent in democracy are the ingredients of a harmonious and peaceful vision of life and society. When promoting democracy, the United Nations is aware of the symbolic importance of democracy, as well as of its real importance in the attainment of the goals of peace, justice, development and social integration.

The United Nations, by becoming better able to place itself in the historical perspective of the present and the future, has made a considerable contribution to redefining what the present and the future demand of us. It has discovered that it must prepare the international community for a new social compact, one that we hope will be given concrete form at the World Summit for Social Development in Copenhagen in March 1995.

Mrs. Lopez Villatoro (Guatemala) *(interpretation from Spanish)*: My delegation is convinced that anything that can be done to strengthen national democratic systems deserves the recognition and resolute support of the international community.

As a Central American, I accord all due significance to the flowering of the democracy that we now have a good chance of witnessing in all the countries of Central America.

Our satisfaction at this fortunate situation is commensurate with the tremendous efforts and sacrifices required to achieve it.

Above and beyond the strictly political sphere, the compelling need to alleviate hunger, mass poverty, deficiencies in education, disease and social injustice continues to be the principal challenge facing us. It is not always easy to attack these evils in a context of strict respect for all democratic principles. However, if this is done, we shall not only guarantee that the social transformations that are necessary if underdevelopment is

to be overcome are not to the detriment of democracy; we shall also ensure democracy's full validity. Democracy does not have just a political dimension; it has economic, social and cultural aspects too.

If one addresses merely its political dimension, one must add that democracy is not simply a system for the free and regular election of leaders but also a means of ensuring sustained, general participation in decision-making and of curbing the arbitrary use of power. This machinery cannot function effectively if it is not used in conjunction with respect for all human rights.

The political will of the Central American peoples to build peace, abandoning once and for all an era of violent conflicts caused by the cold war as well as by domestic disputes, was reflected in the agreements entered into by the Central American Presidents, which included an appeal to international institutions to support this process. As a result of these agreements, our countries, States and participating organizations, particularly those in the United Nations system, have not only contributed resources but also taken innovative and effective measures to build and consolidate peace in the region.

This has demonstrated that our nations cannot progress outside the international community. Closely related to our efforts to overcome the obstacles to the strengthening of our democratic institutions are duties that must be performed to ensure world wide respect for human rights and to ensure conditions that are conducive to the promotion of our democratic objectives.

It is vitally important to our countries that the international community and its institutions take into account the peculiarities of the complex situation of new or restored democracies, where many of the pressures threatening democracy result from the very struggle to obtain democracy and from the expectations of immediate satisfaction that the word stirs in those who have long felt impassive, thus causing disappointment if these are not speedily satisfied. Such frustrations, as well as making an unfavourable impact on Governments, can give anti-democratic forces an opportunity to come into play. This is why, without denying freedom to the enemies of freedom, we must none the less be vigilant and take care to ensure that the tender buds growing from the seeds of democracy in our countries do not succumb to the aggression perpetrated by anti-democratic forces.

In the new international setting, multilateralism has regained impetus and is making an increased contribution to the solution of problems whose continued existence might imperil the validity of democracy. My country can testify to this. United Nations bodies have contributed effectively to helping our Governments to strengthen democratic institutions, enforce the rule of law, conclude successfully negotiations concerning the firm desire for reconciliation between Guatemalans and repatriate thousands of our compatriots who, during the years of violence, sought refuge abroad.

But we must do still more to consolidate democracy in our country and, thereby, complete a process that cannot be successful unless secure and true peace reigns. This is why we hope that the United Nations, through the recently established United Nations Mission in Guatemala (MINUGUA), will continue to contribute, directly or indirectly, to securing a prompt conclusion to negotiations aimed at bringing a speedy and definitive end to the domestic armed conflict that has plagued Guatemala during more than 30 years of struggle which is as tragic as it is pointless.

The delegation of Guatemala believes that the important draft resolution, which was introduced so eloquently by the Ambassador of Nicaragua and is sponsored by 60 countries, will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Cardenas (Argentina) *(interpretation from Spanish):* It gives my delegation real satisfaction to speak on the topic of the support that the United Nations can provide for the efforts of some Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

As we did in July, when the Argentine Republic, together with the 73 other States, participated in the Second International Conference on this question, we support this priority task. The Conference to which I refer took place in the capital city of Managua as a follow-up to what took place in Manila in June 1988.

From this rostrum my Government reaffirms its unswerving and unequivocal commitment to democracy and freedom. It must be understood that democracy, individual freedoms and human rights have a close relationship that makes them the three central pillars of modern development which does not overlook the human being.

Political democracy is far from being a luxury for rich peoples. Rather, it is an urgent necessity for poor countries — something without which it would be difficult to direct the voice of the people to the authorities

or to eliminate corruption. It would also be difficult to remedy abuses or to remove incompetent leaders. But when Governments are weakened by arrogance, frivolity or lack of understanding, they lose the trust and the support of their peoples and — at the polls they are replaced in the orderly fashion and with the stability that only democracy can provide, for in the veins of democracy run the very antibodies that protect it from excessive behaviour. There is no real democracy where it is impossible to express the popular will in universal elections in which pluralism is respected.

Since the end of the cold war, and since the grand utopia that for decades had attempted to pervert the very notion of democracy collapse along with the Berlin wall, it is clear that democracy has gradually become the ideal to be achieved and a growing reality throughout the world.

In Latin America the 1980s were known as the "lost decade". The 1990s are beginning to be known as the "decade of Latin America". In all corners, events are illustrating the widespread commitment to a new model based on democracy and freedom.

In addition, in the particular case of Central America it is becoming clear that peace is an essential component of development, and it cannot be repeated too often that without development, peace and democracy are inevitably vulnerable to attack.

Democracy is important because it makes it possible for individuals to enjoy the full exercise of their freedoms, is incompatible with terror and does not allow the State to crush the individual. To that end, we have not only the formal institutions that characterize a democracy, but also freedom of information, which is able to penetrate the walls behind which power, in all its forms, sometimes hides its lack of respect for human rights.

In the framework of democracy and of the freedom that it generates and guarantees, initiative flourishes, and the opportunities that derive from both political and economic freedom are maximized for everyone.

Strictly speaking, the modern formula of development is based upon the pillars of democracy and the market, as well as upon the responsibilities that in that formula are incumbent upon the State, which must guarantee for society as a whole, the equilibrium that prevents inequity from emerging and flourishing.

However, democracy does not automatically mean perfection. It is nothing more and nothing less than the best and fairest path. It provides more opportunities and, despite the risks, offers the greatest rewards because it accepts diversity, does not impose homogeneity, allows for creativity, makes it possible to reward effort, unmasks authoritarianism and, above all, is an instrument of respect and a vehicle of tolerance.

Democracy also implies acceptance of diversity. Hence, it makes it possible to leave behind obsessions with equality, which destroy initiative, nullify character, distort liberty and alienate consciences. Those obsessions always end in failure because they lack political logic and economic sense and because justice and arithmetics are not and never will be synonymous.

Democracy must be constructed step by step and must always be preserved, in a slow process along a timeless road that, like so many others, is built as one travels on it.

Those who lived in the darkness of democracy's absence need the encouragement of those who, on the other hand, have enjoyed it for so long, have made of it the backbone of their character and therefore have the duty to promote its dissemination. It is precisely they, individually or as a group, who can help to straighten pathways and, in solidarity, help to reduce the cost of transition or ensure that the benefits of democracy come soon to those who go on striving, even though they lack the most basic resources.

Not so long ago in Managua we agreed to ask the Secretary-General to undertake study on the ways in which the United Nations system could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate the restored democracies. That is why we are here: that objective remains a priority for us. For this reason the Argentine Republic supports and co-sponsors with total conviction the draft resolution before us today.

Mr. Castaneda Cornejo (El Salvador) (*interpretation from Spanish*): In 1988, when the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies was held in Manila, international relations, despite the changes that had taken place, still reflected the confrontational character of the cold-war period. In world politics there existed a dynamic making it impossible to define the world panorama. Fear and mistrust of advancing and deepening the process of the democratization of international society persisted.

In 1994, after six short years, there have been profound transformations that have changed the geopolitical map of the world. Events in Eastern Europe and the former Soviet Union, resulting in new State configurations, as well as those in other nations that achieved their independence or formally attained statehood and were formally admitted as full-fledged Members of the United Nations, came about through expression of the aspirations of their respective peoples, which were finally able to exercise their rights to independence, self-determination and their own national, cultural, ideological, religious and other identities and to forge their own destiny within a broad concept of democracy. Regrettably, in most of these cases progress has not been made in consolidating that broad concept because of the resurgence of various types of old antagonisms between several of those new State entities.

In an international context in which conflicts and problems of global interest have increased substantially and the United Nations has taken on more responsibilities and faces greater demands to provide responses and find solutions, not only to political problems but also to priority economic and social problems, the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies was held in Nicaragua from 4 to 6 July this year. The Conference's fundamental objective was to reaffirm the importance and effectiveness of representative democracy as a system of government and to examine the progress, obstacles and prospects of the new democracies at the national, regional and global levels.

Allow me to make special mention of the democratization process in Central America, especially in El Salvador.

Since before the 1980s, Central America had begun to suffer the effects of a deep political, economic and social crisis that came about precisely because national societies had developed within a system of limited democracy — in particular, because social programmes were not formulated or executed, a doctrine of national security was promoted, political arenas were closed and civil, political, economic, social and cultural rights were violated in one way or another. The international changes, especially the new structure of world power, had their effects on the region's critical situation, creating conditions that made possible and viable the transition from confrontation to peace, the consolidation of democracy, and sustainable development.

Esquipulas II — "The procedures for the establishment of a firm and lasting peace in Central America — adopted in Guatemala in 1987, is an agreement in which our Presidents decided to take a direct role in searching for political solutions to the Central American crisis and to join forces in order to achieve peace, democracy and development through the adoption of measures and programmes to overcome its causes. The execution of those agreements was facilitated by the dynamic and changing international situation, which has resulted in the end of armed conflicts and the process of consolidating peace and democracy in Nicaragua and El Salvador. Negotiations continue in Guatemala to resolve that country's political and social problems and to initiate a process of maintaining and consolidating peace.

In the case of El Salvador, as we have indicated on other occasions, the crisis of the 1980s and its causes were similar to the situation that existed in other developing countries. With regard to the serious Salvadorian problem, I would refer to the fifth paragraph of our statement in the Security Council on 23 November, during the discussion of the extension of the mandate of the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL), in which we said:

> "In considering the magnitude of the crisis experienced in El Salvador, we must look at the past. The crisis was not born out of thin air; its origins and evolution were the results of longstanding and profound social, political, economic and cultural imbalances. One negative aspect of our national life was the scarcity of forums and mechanisms for exercising ideological pluralism and respect for partisan coexistence, which hindered the full development of a democratic system." *(S/PV.3465, p. 2-3)*

It is important to point out that in El Salvador there was in parallel with the armed conflict a political attempt to open a dialogue and create opportunities for negotiations between the parties to the conflict, a process that grew stronger and more dynamic after 1990. That was when we asked the Secretary-General to mediate in the search for political solutions and the achievement of peace by peaceful means, as well as in the adoption of measures to bring about the reunification and rebuilding of the country on democratic principles, particularly respect for and protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms.

As the international community is aware, the Agreement signed at Chapultepec, Mexico, in January 1992 put an end to the armed conflict in El Salvador, marking the conclusion of the first phase of the

peace process but the beginning of a complex and difficult period of transition during which the commitments made served as the framework for a developing political, economic and social process, which we are convinced will culminate in the consolidation of democracy.

It is important to emphasize the role played by the United Nations, both through the Secretary-General and his representatives and through the international machinery set up to verify and contribute to the maintenance and consolidation of the peace process in Central America: the United Nations Observer Group in Central America (ONUCA), the United Nations Observer Mission to Verify the Electoral Process in Nicaragua (ONUVEN), the International Support and Verification Commission established in conjunction with the Organization of American States (CIAV/OAS) and the United Nations Observer Mission in El Salvador (ONUSAL). We should also stress the support of friendly countries directly interested in the region, particularly those that have cooperated, and continue to cooperate, with the Secretary-General in the search for political solutions, and those that have provided technical and financial assistance for the implementation of special programmes of cooperation designed to supplement the peace efforts by attacking the structural causes of our problems and strengthening the democratic process.

International support was very important — indeed, indispensable — in consolidating democracy, and it has played a special role in the United Nations work on the ground in Central America, which has not only contributed to verifying compliance with commitments entered into and to the maintenance and consolidation of peace, but has also acted as a deterrent to elements likely to destabilize the peace process and the consolidation of democracy.

Notwithstanding the progress made, we must recognize that democracy is fragile, particularly if the priority problems of society are not dealt with. These include the need to improve the difficult social conditions of large sectors of the population, conditions which could at any moment endanger the advances already made.

Given these considerations and the importance of finding new ways and means to avoid a recurrence of this tragic period in Salvadorian life, El Salvador participated in the First and Second International Conferences of New or Restored Democracies, convinced that the democratic system in all its dimensions is the only system by which societies can achieve dialogue and reconciliation, maintain the necessary stability and realize sustainable development, which, in turn, can contribute to strengthening international peace and security. That is especially true if at the same time there is a democratization of international relations in which equal rights are enjoyed by all States members of the international community; that would be a positive factor for promoting and consolidating the era of international solidarity and cooperation that will characterize the so-called new international order.

El Salvador, convinced of the need to exchange experiences and adopt effective complementary measures to consolidate democracy, supports and agrees with the provisions of the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies. In this connection, we support the decision adopted at that Conference to request the Secretary-General to submit, in accordance with established procedures, a report on how the Organization could support the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, a request reflected in draft resolution A/49/L.49, of which we are a sponsor.

In conclusion, I should like to say that we understand the Organization's financial problems, which stand in contrast to the increased demands on it and its old and new responsibilities. In addition, although the Charter does not spell out the concept of democracy, we understand its Preamble and its purposes and principles to contain the basic principles of democracy at all levels. For the United Nations to be effective and meet the hopes and expectations of nations, Member States must give it all the political support it requires and meet their financial obligations, so as to provide it with the resources it needs to make the principles and purposes of the Charter a reality for "We the peoples of the United Nations". I am thinking in particular of the promotion of social progress and raising the standard of living, within a broader concept of freedom. We believe that this is in line with the new development strategy and the Secretary-General's Agenda for Development, priority items in our Organization's agenda, and a new concept to lead to the realization of the provisions of the Charter.

Mr. Berrocal Soto (Costa Rica) (*interpretation from Spanish*): Costa Rica attaches great importance to this agenda item, and we sincerely thank the delegation of the sister Republic of Nicaragua, and especially Ambassador Erich Vilchez, for the care and diligence with which they have brought to the Assembly's attention the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action adopted at the Second

International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held from 4 to 6 July 1994.

Prince Sisowath Sirirath (Cambodia), Vice-President, took the Chair.

These documents make an extraordinarily well-thought-out and thought-provoking contribution to the work of the United Nations as this millennium draws to a close, and in the context of the current international situation. Still more than that, in the view of my country it would be difficult to conceive of a more ambitious or expedient programme, than the one set forth in the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action, a programme that is commensurate with the greatest and deepest aspirations of the peoples of the world, in the four corners of the globe, without exception.

Costa Rica is an ancient and well-established democracy with more than 100 years of experience of a system embodying public and private freedoms. Since the end of the nineteenth century — in other words, more than half a century before the establishment of the United Nations — those who govern us have been elected every four years by secret ballot in free elections under a multiparty system that effectively and comprehensively guarantees the free and sovereign expression of the will of the people and full respect for the fundamental rights of all of its citizens without distinction as to ideology, policy, sex, race or religion. Since 1948 we have been a democracy with neither weapons nor army, and now, only a few years before the end of the twentieth century, we are involved in one of the most ambitious and widely acknowledged programmes, world wide, to preserve the environment and protect nature and biodiversity. The transformation of our national development process and our international relations into a plan for sustainable development is our current national goal, and to this end we are working actively with the fraternal countries of Central America and with the support of the international community.

These credentials, a source of legitimate pride to all Costa Ricans of all political and religious persuasions, are not however enough. Nor are they enough for other century-old and exemplary democracies also represented in this General Assembly. The democratic system is, by definition, a perfectible process and therefore, over time the building and developing of a society and country that enjoys freedom and ensures strict respect for the law is a daily obligation and responsibility of all citizens and of the bodies that represent them. This is equally true in the economic and social sphere, and with regard to the constant modernization and honing of democratic institutions, governance, control of the exercise of political power, full and absolute respect for human rights and the daily exercise of such rights and obligations on the part both of those who govern and of those who are governed.

This is why the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action are an inspiration and a call on us to work together and in true international cooperation, both North-South and South-South. By this positive and necessary sharing of experience, cooperation is enhanced and encouraged by the conceptual differences in views on the organization as such and the functioning of democratic institutions themselves, considered in the context of parliamentary systems in the style of European democracies or presidential systems as we understand democracy in America, in the context of the juridical traditions and legal systems of Roman, French or Anglo-Saxon inspiration, or the even more ancient and original slant of the age-old cultures of Asia. These universal sources of inspiration are part of the common heritage of mankind, which can and indeed must be shared in order to support and encourage democratic processes in the so-called new or restored democracies, to strengthen the system of public and private freedoms, to consolidate and refine the electoral processes and systems, or control over political power, and the separation of the powers of the State, in each and every one of the democratic countries that make up the United Nations.

But this sharing of experience and this programme of cooperation, as pointed out in the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action, must transcend the sphere of conceptual criteria and value judgements on the democratic system and freedom, as opposed to totalitarian and authoritarian regimes, of the left or of the right, fundamentalist or religious, or merely the result of military or populist ambitions. This exercise must go beyond rhetoric. The concerted efforts of the international community must be directed towards, and must lead to, concrete programmes of action and the consolidation of an effective platform for international cooperation, with the support of the Secretariat and the agencies of the United Nations system, and also those of the developed countries and world or regional financial bodies for international cooperation. People are tired of words and good intentions. The time has come for action. It is time to work together, effectively, to consolidate and entrench the spirit of freedom which has transformed the democratic system, in these closing years of the twentieth

century, and made it into the supreme system of coexistence between people and between nations.

The establishment of a trust fund to support the promotion and consolidation of new or restored democracies would mark a positive and inspiring step forward in this direction which is the sign of the times.

If this were to happen, as called for in and inspired by the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action, then we would be working, more than in many other fields of action and international cooperation, for the development and the consolidation of the noble principles and objectives which, fifty years ago, inspired the signing of the San Francisco Charter and the very establishment of the United Nations.

In keeping with these principles, Costa Rica supports and has joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/49/L.49, on agenda item 159, entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". We are certain that this is fully in keeping with the age-old democratic history and tradition of Costa Rica. Costa Rica hopes also that this draft resolution will be adopted by consensus as a tribute to all those countries represented in the General Assembly on the eve of the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the United Nations, to be commemorated in 1995.

Mr. Ayalon (Israel): At the outset, I wish to express our appreciation to Nicaragua for its initiative in bringing this issue before the General Assembly. We were proud to support this initiative from the beginning.

We are pleased to see that a growing number of States are recognizing the fundamental relationship between democracy, development, peace, security and respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms.

Democratization is not only a moral issue: it is tied directly to the establishment of peace and stability. The existence of a democratic government is the central guarantee for preventing policies of violence and aggression. Never has one democracy made war upon another. This is not the result of chance. Rather, it stems from the very nature of democratic government, which puts people's destinies in their own hands, and is attentive to the people's yearnings for peace and prosperity.

Openness and participation also encourage sustainable development. Democratic societies produce pluralistic, open and enterprising economies, and therefore they enjoy the highest standard of living in the world.

The growing number of countries that are embracing democratic principles is one of the most positive developments of our time. But we must not grow complacent. Democracies are still a minority among the States Members of the United Nations, and the dangers they face from within and from without are still formidable. The process of democratization is a long one that must be nurtured and protected if it is to bear fruit. It is dependent upon courageous leadership and the development of grass-roots support.

Therefore, it is appropriate for the United Nations to support the efforts of the Governments of new or restored democracies. The international community should promote the development of democratic political cultures by instilling democratic values in the people, especially in the young. Education for democracy should be a never-ending process that encourages citizens to be informed and active participants in the noble task of government. Economic assistance is also crucial to buttress democratic reforms and to ensure the viability of young democratic institutions. We are certain that the report of the Secretary-General which will be submitted to the General Assembly at its fiftieth session will give the highest priority to the requested support from the United Nations system.

Israel is encouraging democratization with deeds. For this purpose we responded to the request of the United Nations and sent a group of observers to the first free, all-race elections in South Africa. We also answered the call of the United Nations by sending observers to monitor the elections in Mozambique. In addition, at the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, held in Managua last July, we offered to sponsor an international course on democratic administration. This course will address such subjects as the holding of elections, checks and balances, education for democracy, and other subjects which will enhance the democratic process. We are pleased that plans for the course are proceeding apace.

Israel has also suggested to the Preparatory Committee for the Fiftieth Anniversary of the United Nations that it consider including an event marking the contribution of democracy to world peace.

Israel is pleased to have been among the sponsors at this session of a number of draft resolutions supporting

democratization. We view this as an expression of the importance we attach to the issue, as well as a signal of our readiness to cooperate with the international community in providing assistance to new and restored democracies throughout the world. Accordingly, we have joined in sponsoring draft resolution A/49/L.49 and look forward to its adoption by consensus.

Mr. Motsyk (Ukraine) (*interpretation from Russian*): The delegation of Ukraine welcomes the inclusion in the agenda of the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session, at the initiative of Nicaragua, of the item entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". We were among the sponsors of that initiative, and are co-sponsors of the draft resolution (A/49/L.49) on the item.

In our view, it is both important and timely to consider the question of promotion and consolidation of new or restored democracies. New or restored democracies constitute a significant proportion of the international community, and their fate will to a large extent determine the course of world history as a whole and will define tomorrow's world and what mankind will take with it into the twenty-first century.

In that connection, the delegation of Ukraine conveys its gratitude to the Government of the Philippines, which organized the First International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, for the idea of an exchange of experiences among States that are new or restored democracies. The two International Conferences that have been held — in the Philippines in 1989 and in Nicaragua in 1994 — demonstrated the indubitable usefulness of discussing the problems of new or restored democracies, and showed that the Conference, where States of all regional groups are represented, is gradually acquiring a clearer organizational framework. We think it would be useful to continue this activity in the future.

The delegation of Ukraine wishes to express particular gratitude to the Government and the people of Nicaragua for their excellent organization of the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held in Managua from 4 to 6 July 1994. It provided an opportunity to engage in a constructive and productive exchange of views and to formulate and adopt by consensus two important documents: the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action. The delegation of Ukraine participated in the work of the Conference and played a very active part in formulating the texts of those two documents.

In our view, the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action constitute a programme for new or restored democracies in their efforts to consolidate the democratic course they have chosen. The provisions of the two documents include a comprehensive set of tasks that must be carried out by States building a democratic society for the first time or restoring democracy after a period of totalitarian rule.

I shall not attempt a detailed analysis of the Managua documents. My delegation wishes merely to touch on the elements that we view as key provisions. We agree with the statement in the Declaration that democracy is the best way to achieve human and social development. We also believe that a solid, democratic and pluralism system is closely linked to sustainable development and improvement of the quality of life of all sectors of the population, particularly the lower-income sectors. Wherever development is sustainable, democracy is strengthened; conversely, a decline in the rate of development or an economic slump threatens democratic institutions.

Here special attention must be given to the special situation of States that came into being on the territory of the former Soviet Union. Their situation cannot be equated with the situation of other post-Communist States. The main difference is that in the States of the former Soviet Union there was not only a lack of true democracy but also a lack of private property, and the market mentality was almost completely destroyed. These countries, including Ukraine, must therefore make a twofold transition: from totalitarianism to democracy, and from a centralized economy to a market economy. In Ukraine, moreover, that twofold problem is compounded by the enormous burden of the Chernobyl catastrophe and the multi-billion-dollar cost of destroying nuclear weapons and converting the military industry we inherited.

One of the factors that are seriously impeding the development of the democratic processes in the world is the outbreak of conflicts. We share the general concern at the bloody conflicts that are still raging and we support the appeal contained in the Managua Declaration for peaceful, political solutions. Of great importance to us is paragraph 25 of the Declaration, which states that

> "The utmost respect for sovereignty, independence, territorial integrity, the inviolability of borders and compliance with legally valid international treaties

> is indispensable for development and the consolidation of democracy." *(A/49/713)*

Finally, the provisions that relate to the problem of disarmament are also of particular importance. In keeping with paragraph 22 of the Declaration, new or restored democracies firmly support disarmament agreements between States that possess nuclear and conventional weapons.

In this connection, the delegation of Ukraine wishes to inform the General Assembly that, during the Summit of the Heads of State or Government of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe held in Budapest on 5 December 1994, Ukraine transmitted to the States depositaries of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) the instrument of our country's accession to that Treaty. As was stated by President Leonid Kuchma of Ukraine when he addressed the Summit, the decision to accede to the Treaty

> "is a truly historic event which proves the peace-loving nature, openness and predictability of our foreign policy ... A State which has on its territory the third largest nuclear-weapon potential in the world has voluntarily renounced the status of nuclear State and acceded to the NPT".

Ukraine now has reason to hope that nuclear States, primarily Parties to the Trilateral Agreement dated 14 January 1994, will, in keeping with their obligations, expedite delivery to Ukraine of financial, technical and other assistance, in light of the process of our nuclear disarmament.

We hope that the start made by Ukraine in that process of nuclear disarmament will serve as a good example to other nuclear States. This would help to release major financial resources and help to channel them to development purposes which, in turn, would lead to the consolidation of democratic processes in the world.

The problem of promoting and consolidating new or restored democracies is an extremely important matter. Like any other important matter this problem should not be disregarded by the United Nations. We believe that even at this stage the United Nations is doing much to promote democratic processes in the world as a whole and in individual States in particular. We believe that this trend should be further strengthened, particularly this year when the question of promoting and consolidating new and restored democracies is being discussed at the General Assembly for the first time.

In conclusion, the delegation of Ukraine expresses the hope that draft resolution A/49/L.49 will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Samassekou (Mali) *(interpretation from French):* My delegation welcomes the inclusion on the agenda of the forty-ninth session of an additional item entitled "Support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies". My country joined in sponsoring the request to include this item, as well as the draft resolution now before the Assembly. We hope that the draft resolution will be adopted by consensus.

The question before us for consideration is of particular interest for Mali which, like many other countries, participated in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies held in Managua, Nicaragua, from 4 to 6 July 1994.

The Conference adopted two important documents — the Managua Declaration and the Plan of Action. In the Declaration the Conference requested the Secretary-General to undertake a study on ways in which the United Nations system could support efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies.

In our various statements in the general debates at previous sessions, the delegation of Mali described to the General Assembly the profound political changes that have occurred in Mali in recent years.

Indeed, beginning on 26 March 1991, Mali, has embarked on a process of democratization with the establishment of democratic institutions and freedom of expression for print and radio journalists, the entry into the political arena of approximately 40 rival parties competing in the municipal elections, the election of a National Assembly consisting of 11 political parties and, finally, the election of a President of the Republic by universal suffrage.

While the democratic transition was concluded with the official investiture of the President of the Third Republic on 8 June 1992, the democratic process is still continuing in a particularly difficult socio-economic context.

Since the advent of democracy, State authority is constantly subjected to fresh trials. The concept of democracy is not properly understood because for some people democracy means licence, total freedom, even anarchy.

The socio-economic situation also causes concern, because Mali, like other developing countries, has few resources to deal with the many priority needs of our people: education, public health, water supplies for villages and the creation or maintenance of the infrastructure.

To these many requirements are now added the pressing demands of young people - particularly those of school age, unemployed graduates and inhabitants of certain disadvantaged areas. The Government is also facing other demands connected with employment, from people who have taken voluntary retirement and those who have lost their jobs because of structural adjustment programmes.

The situation I have just described has not affected the resolve of the authorities of my country to find solutions to existing problems. The Government has thus concluded a social covenant with the National Union of Workers, and it has also organized a national debate on the employment problem. The social covenant, by establishing a free, responsible partnership between the Government and the representatives of various socio-professional categories, has since 1992 made it possible to stem social crises, whose ongoing harmful effects have made young democracies more vulnerable.

As part of its work to promote women, the Government organized a national forum for women, followed by a workshop to define a policy for women. It also set up a Secretariat of State for social action and for the promotion of women as well as a commissariat for the promotion of women, headed by a woman holding the rank of Minister.

More recently, regional conferences have been organized throughout the country, providing an opportunity for an open and fruitful debate on the future of the nation. All people have been enabled, in their respective regions, to state their views on the main concerns of the nation and to propose solutions.

A summary of the various proposals was produced at the national level and submitted to the Government. Several steps have been recommended to consolidate democracy and the foundation of a State based on the rule of law. Particular emphasis has been placed on promoting a democratic culture for the continuous heightening of civic awareness.

It is recognized that decentralization, in keeping with the principle of open government reaffirmed by the constitution, remains one of the main ways to strengthen our young democracy in Mali and to promote economic, social and cultural development based on the specific features of each grass-roots community.

Discussions have also taken place on structural adjustment, devaluation of the CFA franc and the problem of the foreign debt. The debate on economic reform showed the need to ensure that more account was taken of the social dimension of structural adjustment. The Government has undertaken an economic recovery programme including reform of our public finances.

The international community, and particularly the United Nations system, should support young democracies throughout the world. In this respect, my delegation is pleased that democracy has been restored in Haiti, thanks to the determination of the people of Haiti and the efforts of the international community. The return, on 15 October 1994, of President Jean-Bertrand Aristide put an end to the illegal regime imposed on the Haitian people by the coup d'état of 30 September 1991. My delegation read with interest the report (A/49/689) of the Secretary-General on the situation of democracy and human rights in Haiti, and listened carefully to the statement made on 28 November by the Minister for Foreign Affairs and Worship of the Republic of Haiti on developments in the situation since the return of President Aristide. My delegation supports his appeal to the international community to support the efforts of the Haitian Government to create conditions favourable to the establishment of a lasting democracy.

In Africa, despite the efforts made by many Governments to apply structural adjustment programmes, the economic situation and the living conditions of our peoples are still difficult. The World Conference on Human Rights, held in Vienna in June 1993, recognized the interdependence of democracy, development and human rights. It opened the way to international cooperation to promote all human rights, including the right to development.

My delegation believes that the Agenda for Development should give special attention to the specific situation of young democracies, whose consolidation will

guarantee peace and security, which is essential for improving the well-being of their peoples and therefore the well-being of the entire international community.

Nascent, still-fragile democracies have to confront the adverse effects of an unfavourable economic situation, drastic structural adjustment measures, debt-related problems and socio-political tensions. This situation has a negative impact on the entire democratic process.

Strengthening the process of democratic openness and economic liberalization that has begun in many developing countries requires the support of the international community, because there can be no true democracy without development. My delegation would therefore like to take this opportunity to propose the establishment of a special fund to support new or restored democracies.

Democracy needs a secure, stable environment to bloom. In many regions international peace and security are seriously threatened by instability caused by local conflicts, resulting in increased numbers of refugees, and by religious questions, which are becoming increasingly important. My delegation calls upon the entire international community to mobilize further to confront this dangerous situation.

Mr. Sychou (Belarus) (*interpretation from Russian*): The number of sponsors of draft resolution A/49/L.49 attests to the breadth and topicality of the process of restoring democracies and forming new democracies and the global scope of this process. Belarus was among the sponsors of this draft resolution.

New and restored democracies are a comparatively new phenomenon in the international community. The speed with which the democratization processes are taking place caught the international community somewhat by surprise. We lack a properly worked out mechanism to give clear prescriptions for integrating these democracies into existing and recently created international structures.

At the same time, one cannot criticize new and restored democracies for lack of willingness to adapt to existing international realities. In this context, States participating in both the Manila and Managua International Conferences sent a signal to the international community that they were interested in cooperation.

But all too often the price of integration into these new international structures is too high for these countries, which are entitled to expect greater support for their efforts from the appropriate international mechanisms, since this adaptation is in everybody's interests.

Unfortunately, we continue to note the inadequacy of the existing system of external support for reform processes in new and restored democracies when compared to the costs incurred by those democracies in the transitional period. In these circumstances, the reserves of social stability are soon depleted and require urgent coordinated action on the part of the entire international community.

Preventing a new division of the world into comparatively prosperous islands of security, which are mere specks in the ocean of the world's growing instability, requires preventing a social tsunami that could sweep away all the positive achievements that have been made in recent years. The answer to this challenge of our times is to be found in preventive diplomacy in the context of broad-based international support for efforts undertaken by new and restored democracies.

New democracies virtually everywhere are confronting the common challenge of ensuring the peaceful processes of political transformation, the establishment and consolidation of internal democratic institutions and norms, and structural readjustment accompanied by socially oriented economic transformations backed up by a system of measures and guarantees for social justice in society.

In many cases, the transitional process is painful and sometimes results in violence and unrest, which leads to a disorganization of the bases of economic life and generally accepted values and worsened international and domestic problems. It is typical that, given the inseparability of the processes of development and disarmament, the experience of some countries shows disappointing results in the conversion of military production and arms reduction when compliance with international obligations in this field diverts meagre resources from measures to undertake urgent tasks of economic development.

This problem is being faced acutely by Belarus and certain other countries with economies in transition. It is difficult to explain to our people why energy-intensive facilities are working to destroy military technology while other plants are closing down because of a lack of energy resources.

The success of the transformation processes depends of course on the countries most affected by them. But this success also depends on the manifestation of active solidarity on the part of all leading industrially developed countries, developing countries and countries with economies in transition. Since it is up to all countries, irrespective of their level of development, to create a healthy and vital world economy, the failure of economic transformations will inevitably lead to the collapse of democratic institutions. Since there is no middle ground in this process, it will soon entail a return to former confrontation, with all of its domestic, regional and international consequences. Certain groups of countries see different possibilities in this scenario.

At the Budapest meeting of the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe, Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali was well advised to appeal to the leading industrially developed countries of Europe that have linked their future to purely economic factors not to ignore the questions of economic stability and security. The Managua Declaration and Plan of Action adopted by the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies confirmed the inseparability between peace, democracy and development and the heightened interest of this group of countries, despite their differing individual situations, in liberalizing international trade, expanding investment and financial support for new economic programmes and resolving problems of external indebtedness.

Democracy is a powerful factor for socio-economic change, but this change is encountering the painful challenges ensuing from a radical break with traditional ways of life for millions of people and requires the establishment of a most-favoured-nation regime for new and restored democracies in a number of basic areas of activity. These countries might be compensated for the losses they have incurred in expanding their export potential by an expansion of the most-favoured-nation regime in trade and an alleviation of their debt burden if we wish them to join the world's oases of economic prosperity.

If we are to judge by the number of participants in the Managua Conference — 74 countries, or almost half of the world community — we can say without exaggeration that the sustainability of the development of new or restored democracies will determine the sustainability of the entire process of bringing the planet together on the eve of the third millennium of human civilization.

In this connection, the study of forms of possible support by the United Nations for efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new and restored democracies will, we hope, enable us to elaborate the necessary recommendations for developing international cooperation in this area.

The international community cannot and should not disregard the specific nature of the evolving processes in countries with new or restored democracies or with economies in transition in particular. The search for ways to promote new and restored democracies by the United Nations will be helped by the preparatory work for the third International Conference on New and Restored Democracies, to be held in 1996 in Bucharest, in which Belarus intends to play an active role.

In conclusion, I should like to express my conviction that the draft resolution on this item will be adopted by consensus.

Mr. Larrain (Chile) (*interpretation from Spanish*): It is very important for my country that the Assembly should be considering the item on support by the United Nations system for the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies. We believe that the subject of democracy and its promotion and development is of great importance to the Organization; Chile considers it essential. One cannot ignore the clear link between democracy, peace and respect for human rights, which are extremely important goals of the Organization.

I wish to make particular reference to one of these links: that between democracy and respect for human rights. There is no doubt that the political system which provides the best guarantees of respect for those rights is the democratic system, in which the rule of law is inherent. In a democracy, the leaders, organs of the State and the governed must function within the law; there are independent courts and effective jurisdictional machinery to which recourse is available and where action can be taken when fundamental rights are violated by acts or failures to act on the part of the State itself. For this and other reasons, support for new or restored democracies is of particular importance and should engage the entire international community.

Democracy, however, cannot be understood solely as the periodical exercise of the right to elect political authorities through free and informed elections. My country believes that these elements are essential but not

sufficient in and of themselves. A real democratic system is strengthened when it goes beyond mere form to embrace economic growth and social development. Without that harmonious interplay no democratic system can remain stable in time and free from social pressures.

These are factors that must be given priority consideration when we design ways and means to support the new democracies that are emerging, or countries in which that system is now being strengthened.

Since, as I have said, democracy is a stabilizing and innovative factor in relations not only among States, but also within the States themselves, it should be in the forefront of our concerns. Within this general context, we participated in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, in Managua. We would like to thank the Government and people of Nicaragua for their efforts and their organization of that important event.

In the same vein, my country will continue to contribute to all efforts that can support new democracies.

Mr. Sacirbey (Bosnia and Herzegovina): The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is an enthusiastic co-sponsor of the draft resolution contained in document A/49/L.49. We believe that it will assist the new and restored democracies in fulfilling our aspirations, as well as providing some enlightenment to those democracies already established.

Democracy and freedom may be mankind's natural condition but, as the histories of our own countries indicate, it is by no means mankind's normal condition. We have had to sacrifice and struggle to gain our new status. The truest commitment to democracy and freedom manifests itself in the never-ending effort to implement fully the rights and liberties of the individual and to promote the resilience of the society and State in the defence of those rights and liberties.

It means a vigilance against totalitarian forces from within and a healthy wariness of outside domination and aggression. Most of these responsibilities fall on our sovereign nations individually, but it is recognized, and rightly so, that a mutual commitment to collective security and to resistance against external aggression also reduces the dangers from within to our democratic institutions and freedoms.

Real and perceived external threats can be and have been historically exploited to suppress individual freedoms, to promote ultra-nationalism and even fascism, and to empower totalitarian forces from within. Democracy is fragile and can be easily endangered by an inhospitable environment of fear of external forces.

As is well understood from experience, smaller nations are the most exposed to external threat; however, once that threat is removed or reduced, democracy and freedom once again flourish. We, as sovereign nations, have come together within international institutions in order to reduce potential threats through the principle of collective security.

Yet selective application of the collective security system, the Geneva Conventions and the Genocide Convention in fact transforms the entire system from a tool of legality, order and peace to a mechanism for domination and a new imperialism — the very threat all of us want to avoid.

The principles of human rights and international law, and the Charter of the United Nations must be applied only with strict and full respect and compliance in order to make them effective. It is respect for our United Nations Charter and the rules and usages of international law, and not compromise and their abrogation, that create the conditions for democratic development.

There must not be "less privileged" or "more privileged" States in respect of the obligations and rights that arise from membership of the United Nations and commitment to its Charter. Selective respect and selective approaches may lead only to the outbreak of hostilities and wars of aggressions. History stands witness to the fact that whenever these principles have not been upheld and supported by the international community, the world has faced disasters and atrocities.

Yet these are the conditions that have been imposed upon my country, Bosnia and Herzegovina — born out of the democratic desire of people to assume their independence from a regime that refused to accept the democratic trends of the region and engaged in the most totalitarian of pursuits.

Two and a half years later, the resolve of my Government and its people to live in a democratic and multi-ethnic society remains unwavering. As the saying goes, "the proof is in the pudding". In the territories allocated to the Federation of Bosnia and Herzegovina — at least those that are controlled by the Government —

determined efforts are made to live up to democratic standards. Those that have committed human rights abuses are prosecuted. Freedom of the press and media still flourishes and in fact is promoted by my Government despite the climate of war and siege. In his report of 31 October 1994 (E/CN.4/1995/54), the Special Rapporteur on Human Rights abuses in the Former Yugoslavia notes that

> "The rights protected by the Constitution [of the Federation] include all those currently recognized in international human rights law and others which have not yet attained full international recognition. There is also specific enumeration of a package of rights which would entirely reverse the effects of the practice of 'ethnic cleansing' ... The Constitution further provides for the possible deployment in the Federation area of international human-rights-monitoring operations."

Here, my Government wishes to express its great appreciation to those United Nations Protection Force (UNPROFOR) personnel deployed in the territory of the Federation that assist my Government and local authorities in applying these standards.

And what are the efforts of the Pale Serbs *vis-à-vis* democracy? Again, the proof is in the pudding. They herald as heroes those that rape and murder. Foreign journalists, not to mention United Nations and Red Cross personnel are continually prevented from conducting their work in the occupied areas. A November 1994 report of Helsinki Human Rights Watch states:

> "In July of this year, the campaign to expel non-Serbs from Bosnian Serb-held areas of northern Bosnia accelerated, and it continues to this day ... and continues in areas that have long been under absolute Bosnian Serb control; indeed the sweeping institutional nature of ethnic cleansing would not be possible without such control ... [and] thus provide a powerful counterweight to the argument put forth by high-ranking United Nations officials and other international leaders who claim that human rights abuses will decrease after an overall peace accord is signed."

Yet, despite the starkness of the evidence I have just provided from the Special Rapporteur and Helsinki Watch, those entrusted to deliver peace to the Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina continue to carry on the policy of treating victim and aggressor alike, as if both victim and aggressor are equally committed to democracy. The Contact Group is now toying with the idea of allowing these same Pale Serbs to confederate with their sponsors in Belgrade. And what are we to tell our people about this development? Are we to tell them that their struggle for democracy is in vain? Indeed, it has become increasingly evident that some in the international community wish that we would roll over dead on our sides. Or should we tell our people, the raped mothers and the maimed children, that those who did the damage to them did so in the pursuit of democracy? Indeed, some would wish to see this lie pronounced as truth. And we, the Bosnians, are asking ourselves: Why are we being denied our democratic dreams? Are we unworthy of democracy? And is there a dimension in our character and heritage that makes us unworthy of fulfilling these dreams?

The recent manoeuvres of the established democracies of the Contact Group suggest that they have forgotten their own struggles towards democracy. We wonder if the "new" democracy of the Contact Group has fully understood what is democratic and what is not, as it increasingly chooses to associate itself with the interests of the aggressor rather than with those of the new-born Bosnian democracy. In Bosnia the term "democracy" has been perverted — perverted to the extent that war criminals now salivate over the prospect of having their birthdays celebrated in an independent and ethnically pure State. This perverted dream will come true only if the Bosnians and the Contact Group let it happen. The Bosnians will not let it happen.

The Republic of Bosnia and Herzegovina is proud to have become a member of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies. The experiences of all its members are extremely valuable and should be given due attention. To that end, we shall continue to bring our struggle for democracy to the attention of the international community. We remain committed to democracy and will not give up our just struggle. And when we have reached our goal — as surely we will — we will not abandon those whose struggle continues, for we have learned many lessons on the road to freedom and democracy. Perhaps the most important of those lessons concerns the need for resilience in the face of abandonment.

Mr. M. M. Rezaul Karim (Bangladesh): My delegation welcomes and fully endorses the inclusion of item 159 on the agenda of the General Assembly. We believe that this is both a timely and a necessary initiative

regarding a subject that requires continuing scrutiny, focus and attention.

Bangladesh was happy to participate in the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, which was held at Managua from 4 to 6 July, and, thus, to be a party to the Managua Declaration and Plan of Action, now before us. I take this opportunity to record once again our deep appreciation and thanks for the initiative, dedication and painstaking efforts of President Violetta Barrios de Chamorro and the Government and people of Nicaragua, which made this Conference possible and eminently successful.

It is not my intention to refer yet again to the thrust of the outcome of the Managua Conference. This is self-evident. I should like, however, to highlight the two central questions remaining at the core of the decisions that were taken: "Why democracy?" and "Whither democracy?"

In answering the question "Why democracy?" we can sum up the situation by stating that democracy embraces the key elements of popular or people-centred participation, the peaceful succession of Governments, political legitimacy, accountability and transparency. It is widely recognized today that the problems of democracy call for more democracy, and that democracy is viable not always because it chooses the best Governments, but because of its fundamental ability to remove bad Governments peacefully.

At the heart of democracy and its inherent political pluralism are certain basic guarantees that uphold the sovereignty of the people, the worth and dignity of the individual, the rule of law, full respect for and protection of fundamental human rights and, above all, the peaceful search for human development. Democracy is therefore synonymous with peace and stability and provides the actual link between development and human rights. Autocracy, as the Managua Declaration underscores, is incapable of producing commitment to peace. It cannot withstand the free exchange of ideas. Freedom of the press and free speech remain the bastions of democracy and the highest expression of the people's will.

In answering the question "Whither democracy?" we must remember that two aspects — the internal factors and the external factors — are paramount.

Internally, it has to be underscored that democracy, like development, is a process that must be sustained. Democracy is not an end in itself. It is not a static but a dynamic state — a continuum that must be constantly renewed and revitalized. Neither emerging nor established democracies can afford to be complacent, especially in the face of ever-prevalent anti-social and anti-democratic forces. Organizational weaknesses mean that strengthening the capacity, reliability and integrity of core institutions involves long lead times. A democratic culture has to grow and be nurtured to embrace traditions, experience and a broad-based mentality and attitude of compromise and negotiation.

High levels of poverty and unemployment, lack of distributive justice, social unrest arising from ethnic, cultural and minority differences and powerful vested interests that need to be contained remain barriers, and these must be addressed continuously and simultaneously. The hallmark of democracy is constant vigilance to overcome recognized fragility. At the same time, one must not be oblivious to the need to exercise due caution to ensure that democracy is not regarded as being synonymous with licence and anarchy.

Externally, it is a truism — one that has been underlined by the Secretary-General — that democracy is as important among nations as within nations. It seems a particular irony that at a time when world society is characterized by the "triumph" of democracy we have also come face to face with the reality of increasing insularity and the marginalization of the interests of the third world. It is thus imperative to stress that sustaining democracy and development within States is closely linked to the expansion of democratization and the creation of a more conducive economic environment between States at all levels in the international system.

Democratization in international relations is the only basis for building mutual support and respect among nations. As the Secretary-General has stated,

> "In this new era, when information, knowledge, communication and intellectual interchange are critical to economic and social success, democracy must be seen not only as an ideal, or an event, but also as a process which is essential to achieving tangible progress. Democracy supplies the only long-term and sustainable route to successful development." *(A/48/935, para. 137)*

Bangladesh fully endorses and supports the essential premise of the Managua message — that the democratic process and progress in our countries should not occur in isolation, but must be provided with an avenue for continuous communication and contact.

The elements that I have underscored are born of our own experience. Shortly after her election, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, speaking at a conference of international Parliamentarians in Dhaka, underscored the point in these words:

> "Democracy is not merely a system of governance. Democracy is a social system and a lifestyle. The measure of democracy is the measure of the freedom of its humblest citizen. For strengthening the base of democracy there is no alternative to amelioration of the condition of the common man. The people are the main driving force of development."

For us in Bangladesh the choice of democracy was not based primarily upon our adamant opposition to any form of authoritarianism. The previous autocratic regime was foredoomed to isolation and ultimate failure. Without legitimacy its policies became atrophied. Efforts to short-circuit the mandate of the people proved fruitless. Economic and social activities that were distorted to reflect the whims of the ruling élite and the desire to preserve power at any cost were exposed. Overall deprivation was camouflaged by high-visibility projects. The inevitable result was alienation between the Government and the people.

Our experience was replicated in country after country. The myth that only authoritarian regimes could ensure efficiency and take decisive steps was exploded. It is now evident that without mass participation in decision-making and without the responsibility, accountability and transparency which democracy stands for, economic growth and the core values and priorities of society cannot be realized.

For Bangladesh the road to democracy has been a difficult and painstaking process. Yet it has been fortified over the past four years by tangible achievements. Uncompromising resistance, mass movement and agreement among all parties to restore democracy enabled us to replace an entrenched dictatorship with an interim government squarely within our constitutional provisions, charged with the sole task of holding democratic elections. The election, held within the constitutional limit of 90 days, was universally acknowledged to be an exemplary model of democratic expression. Many believed that the new government would seek to gain more power. Yet, through a consensus forged among all parties, a historic transfer was effected from the presidential to the parliamentary system of government. A nation-wide referendum endorsed this change.

The Parliament became the focal point of all development endeavours of the nation. It closely pursued the task of ensuring checks and balances, acting as a catalyst for administrative accountability and transparency, buttressing the rule of law and isolating and addressing human rights distortions and abuses. Since then, efforts have been set in motion to ensure that the succession of governments takes place through elections held in a fair, impartial and peaceful manner. The government is firmly committed to sustaining and strengthening all measures to this end, with the broadest leeway within the parameters of the Constitution of Bangladesh.

Our experience has underlined certain palpable truths. Without democracy the people's potential for socio-economic progress cannot flower. Human rights become meaningless in the face of the dire constraints of poverty, hunger, illiteracy and disease.

For Bangladesh the fight against poverty and steps to unlock growth remain the foremost challenge to sustaining democracy. Concerted efforts have been made to provide a policy environment that will enable us to move towards market-economy freedom. Our core strategy revolves around the development of human resources, a concept that combines participation of the people, alleviation of poverty, supportive environmental growth and advancement of human rights and welfare. Its fundamental goal is to bring the deprived and disadvantaged from the periphery to the centre of development.

Important incremental gains have accrued. We are on the threshold of achieving food self-sufficiency; absolute poverty has declined; the literacy rate has increased; primary health-care services are being extended to the village level; significant advances have been made in containing population growth and in supportive immunization programmes; important measures have been taken to check environmental degradation and contain the devastating impact of recurrent natural disasters; social legislation is being strengthened to protect the rights of women, children, minorities and the disadvantaged; and overall per capita income has gone up, inflation is down and there is a viable macroeconomic base that can sustain growth, which has reached a current rate of 4.5 per cent.

I wish to say in conclusion that democracy requires a total endeavour, nationally and in partnership with global society. Bangladesh fully supports draft resolution A/49/L.49, now before the Assembly, and is happy to be one of its sponsors.

The President (*interpretation from French*): In accordance with General Assembly resolution 3237 (XXIX), of 22 November 1974, and resolution 43/177, of 15 December 1988, I now call on the head of the Observer delegation of Palestine.

Mr. Al-Kidwa (Palestine) (*interpretation from Arabic*): Allow me, first of all, to thank the people and the Government of Nicaragua for having hosted the Second International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, and also for having invited us to participate in the Conference. I should like also to extend thanks and appreciation to the Government and the people of Romania for the offer to host the next conference.

At this moment in history, the Palestinian people is going through a transition, from national liberation to the building of State institutions, on a democratic basis, in the political, economic and social spheres. The past experience of the Palestine Liberation Organization will have its effect, without a doubt, on the course of events in the future. We are proud of the democratic nature of that experience which endured, even under the special conditions of the national liberation phase.

The Palestine Liberation Organization, by its very nature, is an umbrella organization and a structure that encompasses many organizations, forces and political parties. The decision to act on a basis of pluralism, respect for freedom of thought and expression and the democratization of internal relations within the Organization, was the most important decision in the contemporary Palestinian experience. Moreover, the Palestinian experience has enshrined many important elements of democracy, particularly freedom of expression, freedom of association, freedom of the press, the promotion of political and religious tolerance, the principle of free elections at all levels and the complete absence of all repressive and illegal practices. In the course of the national liberation phase, the Palestinian people succeeded in making a practice of respecting the opinions of others, and of making its decisions democratically. It succeeded in avoiding all internal confrontations, in spite of difficult conditions and external factors that militated against our national interests.

Now, after the signing, in the context of the Middle East peace process, of the Declaration of Principles between the Palestine Liberation Organization and Israel, our Palestinian people faces the new challenge of rebuilding in this transitional period, and working towards the final solution that should include, as far as we are concerned, the establishment of the independent State of Palestine, with Al-Quds as its capital.

We believe that the overriding need in this transitional period is the existence of the democratic foundation for the rebuilding process. At the very centre of this is the holding of free and democratic elections in the Palestinian territories in which all Palestinians, with all their political affiliations, should participate. It is important that such elections should lead to a sound form of democratic government wherein the executive is separate from the legislative. Here, we would emphasize the right of all citizens, regardless of their political affiliations, to participate in the elections, even if their affiliation is with political forces or parties that oppose the peace process, so long as such forces or parties act within the law and are committed to achieving their objectives within Palestinian society by peaceful means. The holding of Palestinian general elections as agreed in the Declaration of Principles must be held on a free basis. This means that the Israeli side must discharge its contractual obligations under the Declaration. Foremost among those obligations is the withdrawal of Israel's army of occupation from the inhabited Palestinian areas, namely the cities, villages and refugee camps in order for our people to be able to participate freely in the elections.

The electoral process also requires appropriate international monitoring. In this respect, the United Nations can and must play a vital role in supporting the holding of the elections in a fair and sound fashion. The elections will provide the foundation upon which the Palestinian edifice will be built and within which the fundamental human rights and principal freedoms of all Palestinian citizens will be guaranteed.

Support for the Palestinian people by the international community, and by the United Nations in particular, will undoubtedly serve the cause of democracy in the Middle East and in the world at large. We will learn from our experience and learn from our mistakes. We will learn also from the experience of other democracies in the world. We are convinced that the success of the Palestinian democratic experiment will contribute, without a doubt, to the achievement of a just

and lasting peace in the Middle East and to the consolidation of that peace.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in the debate on this item.

I should like to announce that the following countries have become sponsors of draft resolution A/49/L.49: Bangladesh, Kyrgyzstan, Turkey and the United States of America.

The Assembly will now proceed to consider draft resolution A/49/L.49.

May I take it that the Assembly decides to adopt draft resolution A/49/L.49?

Draft resolution A/49/L.49 was adopted (resolution 49/30).

The President (*interpretation from French*): Before calling on speakers who wish to explain their positions on the resolution just adopted, may I remind delegations that explanations of vote are limited to 10 minutes and should be made by delegations from their seats.

Mr. Zhang Jun (China) *(interpretation from Chinese)*: On behalf of the Chinese delegation, I should like to announce that the Chinese delegation did not participate in the adoption of draft resolution A/49/L.49. My delegation requests that that position be reflected in the official records of the General Assembly.

The President (*interpretation from French*): We have heard the last speaker in explanation of vote.

May I take it that it is the wish of the General Assembly to conclude its consideration of agenda item 159?

It was so decided.

Programme of work

The President *(interpretation from French)*: I should like to announce that concerning agenda item 37 "Strengthening of the coordination of humanitarian and disaster relief assistance of the United Nations, including special economic assistance", the General Assembly will consider all the draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 37 and not yet acted upon on Tuesday, 20 December, in the morning.

Members will recall that the Assembly at its 74th plenary meeting, on 2 December, took action on six of the draft resolutions submitted under agenda item 37.

The meeting rose at 6.30 p.m.